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OF MICHIGAN

1958

LIBRARY SCIENCE
LIBRARY

THE ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE A.A.L.

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THE ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

Official Journal of the Association of Assistant Librarians
(Section of the Library Association)

EDITOR: D. HARRISON

VOL. 51. NO. 10

OCTOBER, 1958

Just Fine

Fines are in the news again, and, alongside them, the problem of reservation charges. Television has been kind enough to spotlight the former; a recent Memorandum of the Finchley Labour Party has castigated the latter. Comment has appeared not only in the usual library periodicals and *The Bookseller*, but also on the middle page of that moulder of modern informed liberal opinion, *The Observer*.

The attack on these charges is two-pronged; they are described as (a) illegal and (b) unfair. Of these the unfairness is, we feel, by far the more important; not because librarians should be insensitive to the need for legality in their affairs, but since the English legal system is flexible enough to be adjusted so that things which are fair also can be made legal. The illegality of these charges, if proved, should be the *means* of their abolition and not the *cause*.

Leaving aside then the legal aspect, is it reasonable that reservation costs should be borne completely by the rates rather than partially by the rates and partially by the individual reader? The Finchley Memorandum considers the fact that the library service is a social service to be in itself a complete case for free reservation. The public library service is a social service in the widest sense of the term, but then so is the health service, and prescriptions have to be paid for, so is local government housing and rents have to be paid, and so we might argue, are corporation lavatories, yet pennies continue to rattle in the slots.

Is it fair to summon up the ghosts of 1850 in this cause? Perhaps they did envisage a service in which no charges for reserving books would be made; but did they envisage in full the world of 1958 when much of a librarian's time and energy is spent in reserving popular novels of the moment and ephemeral semi-non-fiction? If they *had* foreseen this Utopia, they would rapidly have written in a clause legalising much heavier charges than many libraries make to-day. The prompt production of "The Rainbow and the Rose," or "Doctor in the House" may be a social service, but it is a service which is also a luxury and as such, a charge for it is not so obviously unfair as is claimed. Nor are the "members of adult education classes" and "people with particular reading requirements" over whom the Memorandum weeps, the prime fillers of our library coffers. A sliding scale of charges dependent on the type of book would meet their case and differential charges are in force in some libraries. Whether or not such a scale is practically necessary provided reservation charges are kept at a reasonable level is debateable.

And then there are fines. The Finchley Memorandum only condemns these in passing, but sniping continues from other points, including recently the television screen. Why this great concern about people who

cannot assimilate the simple principle that a social service should be equally available to all and cannot be so unless they deliver up their books on time for the benefit of other users? This probably refers to only a minority of fine-payers; the majority usually have a good reason for not returning their books on time and are quite happy to pay the fine in view of the principle involved. Perhaps fines do not have the desired effect of persuading people to return their books on time. Perhaps the principle involved is not worth the trouble of levying them. But to weigh work done against principles involves us in deep water; the modern tendency to scrap the principle and save the time may be thought by some to have gone far enough.

These twin problems are not so simple as the righteous indignation of the abolitionists would lead the simple-minded to believe, and librarians should pause a moment before throwing their full weight on to the side of apparent enlightenment. We need a carefully thought-out and recorded opinion at a high professional level with the necessary legislation undertaken to back it one way or the other. One of the least happy of our tasks as public relations officers is the argument with the "fines are illegal" squad, and members of the profession at many levels must wish to see a clarification of the situation.

NOTICE OF ELECTION

Nominations are invited for the following Officers and Councillors of the Association for the year 1959 :—

Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer and Hon. Editor.

Nine nationally elected Councillors, three of whom must be under thirty years of age on 1st January, 1959.

A member under the age of thirty may stand for election as national councillor in either category, but if he/she wishes to stand as an "under-thirty" candidate this should be stated specifically, together with the age of the nominee as at 1st January, 1959.

Nominations must be made in writing by two or more members of the Association, countersigned by the nominee, and reach me not later than 15th October, 1958.

JOHN H. JONES, *Honorary Secretary*,
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'FRISCO, 'FIFTY EIGHT

An English librarian's report on the 77th Annual Conference of the American Library Association, held in San Francisco, California, July 13th—19th.

by T. M. Hodges

*Reference Librarian, Hamilton College,
Clinton, New York*

Short of holding it in Anchorage, Alaska, the location chosen for this year's A.L.A. Conference could not have been further distant than San Francisco—nor could a more delightful spot have been chosen. "There are few cities in the world whose names alone make the heart beat a little faster. San Francisco, with its spectacular location among hills, islands, bridges and peninsulas, its fine hotels and restaurants, its variety of shops and markets, its breezy cosmopolitan atmosphere, is one of them"—(Editorial, *A.L.A. Bulletin*, May, 1958). So along with other librarians from the eastern United States, I set out on the lengthy journey across the North American continent. Many travelled by air, others took the train; whilst more venturesome types drove across. (The sight of numerous cars broken down by the wayside in the Nevada Desert made me grateful that I did not attempt such a thing). A few, like myself, crossed by bus or a combination of bus and train. This is certainly the best way to see the country if one has the time to spare.

Taking over a week, and visiting Detroit, Chicago, Cheyenne, Salt Lake City and Reno on the way, I arrived at San Francisco during the evening of the opening day of the Conference, Sunday, 13th July. (Total distance covered: 2,936 miles). At the registration desk in the vast Civic Auditorium, each delegate was given a well-stuffed manilla envelope containing maps, diagrams, programs (sic), details of tours, a guide to the best restaurants, bus timetables, and a very useful free pass for obtaining coffee at any branch of the city's equivalent of J. Lyons' Cornerhouses. Along with the envelope, delegates were given a 2in. by 3in. identification card, on which one printed one's personal details—name, library, city and State. This was proof of having registered and paid the \$5 registration fee and was necessary for admission to meetings.

Beneath the Civic Auditorium is an immense exhibition hall where there were no fewer than 456 exhibition stands. Apart from the publishers' stands displaying all the latest books and reference works, there were exhibitions showing all the latest gadgetry available to libraries. Manufacturers and distributors of films, projectors, Hi-Fi gramophones, microcard and microprint readers, furniture and equipment (including "light bulb remover"), photo-copying apparatus and business machines were all anxious to sell their wares. Demonstrations were cheerfully given by those in charge and for the first time in my library career I was able to see Xerography at work. (The exhibition would have been a veritable paradise for Registration—Group B students). All around, electric typewriters clicked, electric motors whirled and the strains of music and the jabbering of foreign tongues could be heard from the stands of the distributors of the "latest" in phonographs and recordings. The three branches of the Armed Forces of the United States all had

stands showing the library provision made for servicemen both at home and abroad. At the same time, appeals were made for recruits to the service. Mobile library vans ("bookmobiles") were accommodated in the exhibition hall itself, and were not placed outside on the parking lot as were those of the West Riding County Library at Harrogate last year. The A.L.A. alone had fifteen stands representing its various sections and divisions. One of these gave details of an insurance plan operated by the A.L.A.

The City of San Francisco treated us royally. Hotels had banners of welcome on their awnings and the Parks Department arranged a special floral display in the Golden Gate Park. (A message of welcome was picked out in flowers). Everyone to whom I spoke in hotels, restaurants, stores and banks expressed an interest in the conference. San Francisco's newspapers gave the Conference full treatment and the radio gave the gathering more than a mere mention. This is how Alex Dreier described the modern library in a nation-wide tribute to the library world, broadcast over the N.B.C. Radio Network on Sunday, 13th July:—

"... some people who have not opened the door of a library in years are still labouring under the unhappy illusion that libraries are somewhat stuffy places where a Victorian-like lady peers over pince-nez glasses and glowers resentfully if voices are raised above a whisper.

"... Well, look again, mister. This is 1958. Thousands of libraries across the country are as modern as your self popping, triple threat (sic), toaster, and twice as active. They are bee-hives of activity—alive, as much as the books that give them their unique flavour.

"The library is the most important building in town, with perhaps the sole exception of the church. For without the library and the knowledge it represents, there would be no power station, no hospitals, no schools or town halls.

"... Somewhere in the billions of books that have been published since man first put thoughts to scroll and paper must be the answer to the ancient problems of man's inhumanity to man. And perhaps someone will find that Golden Answer—in a library—before the world rushes off to keep an appointment with oblivion."

It was quite impossible to attend all the sessions of the Conference. There were well over 100 separate meetings, including closed meetings, committees, library school reunions, dinners, even breakfasts. Readers are referred to the *A.L.A. Bulletin* (May, 1958) wherein will be found the tentative programme. And in the weeks to come reports and conference proceedings will be issued. Those members of the Library of Congress who attended the Conference must have worked overtime since their return, for in the two issues of the *Library of Congress Information Bulletin* for July 21st and 28th, a complete summary of the conference appears. I was still completing the return journey after the second bulletin was issued. I am deeply indebted to the contributors to the *Library of Congress Information Bulletin*—from this bulletin I have taken the report of Mr. Dreier's radio tribute, and the summaries of addresses at meetings which it gives have served to refresh my memory in the writing of this account.

The first general session was held on Monday, 14th July. After introductory remarks by Miss Lucile M. Morsch, President of the A.L.A.,

an address of welcome was given by the Mayor of San Francisco, the Hon. George Christopher. (He remarked that never before had he attended a Convention with such a preponderance of women). The main speaker of the evening was Dr. Luther H. Evans, former Librarian of Congress and now Director-General of UNESCO. The title of his address was "Culture and Mutual Understanding," but discarding his prepared text, Dr. Evans spoke instead of the problems UNESCO faces in trying to carry out a global programme.

"Illiteracy and low living standards are the plague of two-thirds of the world. As long as they last, there can be no sound basis for lasting peace anywhere, because a hungry man is one who has nothing to lose."

Dr. Evans, who was born in Texas, was continually reminded that the "Lone Star State" has been put in the shade by the giant newcomer from the Northwest. Dr. Evans suggested that Texas and California amalgamate to solve the problem of Alaska. Meanwhile, a mere handful of delegates from the 49th State were asked to stand and take their bow. Following the first General Session a reception was held at the St. Francis Hotel. A.L.A. officers greeted delegates and guests and light refreshments were served to the strains of Polynesian music.

That afternoon, delegates who attended the meeting of the University Libraries Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries heard Mr. Lester Asheim and Dr. Ralph Ellsworth speak on "The Academic Library and the Development of Lifetime Reading Interest." The report of a survey recently carried out revealed that only 15 per cent of College Students read and it was suggested that professors and lecturers are often at fault since their philosophy of education differed widely from that of librarians. They often did not encourage reading.

Another meeting, organised by the A.C.R.L., was addressed by Mark Schorer, author and Professor of English at the University of California (Berkeley). In a most entertaining speech, "The Harassed Humanities," Professor Schorer told how he felt that emphasis on science (and social science to a lesser degree) was respected and rewarded but that the humanities have fallen into low regard.

"Worry over how to retrieve the missile mouse, Russian supremacy, the stock market . . . has placed the reading of Homer and the Classics in the background." Professor Schorer did not take kindly to the use of the term "library science" and hinted that librarians were following the general pattern and sheltering under the cloak of science in order to hold their own in a technological and scientific age. He ended:—

"But suppose we solve all of our problems; that would still leave the humanities—and only humanities—to ask the question: For what end did you solve them?"

At a special meeting on Friday, 18th July, both a backward and forward look were taken at National Library Week. (The first NLW was held in March this year and was a great success. Plans are now under way for the 1959 National Library Week). It is mentioned in *Liaison* (June, 1958) that consideration is being given as to whether there should be a National Libraries Week in the United Kingdom next year. Would it not be a good idea to hold it at the same time as the U.S. National Library Week (April 12th—18th)?

On Thursday evening, 17th July, Mr. Quincey Howe, radio news analyst, spoke on "Our Liberties and our Libraries." Mr. Howe limited his remarks to two important liberties which are directly promoted by libraries—freedom to read and freedom to choose what to read from a wide range of material. He pointed out that reading and the "public arts" (cinema, radio and television) are complementary activities and that they are not entirely competitive. Although the public arts reach a far wider audience, their material is far more limited in scope. They are dependent on books as the source of some of their best productions. Whilst radio and TV are devoted to the transmission of ideas, book publishing fosters creativeness, and when it comes to changing the minds of men, no other medium can compete with books.

Following Mr. Howe's address, the "Liberty and Justice" Book awards (\$5,000 each) were presented to George S. Counts for his book, *The Challenge of Soviet Education*; to Herbert Feis for *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin*; and to Len Giovannitti for his novel, *The Prisoners of Combine D*.

An important meeting was held on Friday afternoon, 18th July. Held under the auspices of the National Union Catalog Sub-Committee of the Resources Committee, Resources and Technical Services Division, the topic of discussion was "A proposal to publish a National Subject Union Catalog." Mr. G. A. Schwegman, Jr., Chief of the Union Catalog Division of the Library of Congress, outlined the pattern developing for such a publication. The proposed publication would primarily serve as a subject index to the *National Union Catalog* and would be in book form. The scope and frequency of the planned publication, which could conceivably start in January 1960 and replace the existing *Library of Congress—Books: Subjects*, are not yet decided. However, a sample page was distributed and a questionnaire will soon be sent to the large libraries in order to get their reaction.

In the panel discussion which followed, Mr. Everette Moore, Reference Librarian, University of California (Los Angeles) said he saw in the proposed publication a logical and necessary development of the *National Union Catalog* but raised the question as to whether the proposed subject index would not reduce the subject control of the individual library collection—a danger in college and university libraries where students are trained to use the resources of one integrated collection. He indicated his preference for Classified Arrangement. This remark provided a lively discussion on the question of classified versus Library of Congress subject heading arrangement for the new index. In defence of the latter it was pointed out that practical considerations, viz., the almost general acceptance and uniformity of subject headings in American practice makes this arrangement preferable to a classified arrangement which would be handi-

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capped by the lack of a generally accepted classification scheme and the need for relative indexes. But despite the defence of the subject heading arrangement there were some present who were not convinced. The *British National Bibliography* was quoted and it had been found very useful by some librarians despite its British emphasis. (Not a word was said about "mumbo-jumbo" or "hocus pocus"—nor did anyone protest at the lengthy class numbers in *B.N.B.*). Owing to the fact that few American libraries use the classified catalogue, some of those present were not on familiar ground. One questioner asked, "Isn't it axiomatic that persons need consult an index first when using a classified catalogue?" It will be interesting to see what further developments take place as a result of this discussion.

The final general session was held at 8.30 on Friday evening, 18th July, when Dr. Emerson Greenaway, City Librarian of Philadelphia, was installed as 1958-59 President of the A.L.A.. (It is welcome to note that at this year's Library Association Conference in Brighton there is to be a similar ceremony). President Greenaway then gave his inaugural address in which he suggested international co-operation in the purchase of good books and the development of a world-wide travelling exhibition of significant books. Thus the world of books would be enriched. Following President Greenaway's address, Mr. A. L. Walter, Chairman of the Resolutions Committee, reported for his committee to express the thanks of the A.L.A. to all individuals and organisations contributing to the success of the conference. The final meeting was adjourned at 10 p.m. Not a moment too soon, for at least one delegate had to be up by 5 a.m. next day to set out on the return journey.

The author's grateful thanks go to Mr. Walter Pilkington, Librarian of Hamilton College, for sending him as delegate to the Conference.

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No Straight Tale

Mr. Cawley and his colleagues in non-public libraries (July *Assistant*) deserve our sympathy. We in local government libraries have a union which some of us like and some do not, but they have none at all. It is, however, difficult enough to find a real basis for comparison as between one public library and another, but the variations between public libraries and non-public libraries are legion. As someone put it last year in the A.A.L. Council, "It is as reasonable to compare public libraries and non-public libraries as public houses and non-public houses!"

We must face the fact that our intelligence services are weak. A few years ago a NALGO Staff Side leader (now retired, by the way) said to me in the course of conversation, "What is the matter with your people. We have been discussing a problem with the Library Association and have not been able to get a straight tale out of them." I think the situation is better now, but we still do not know the detailed position in libraries up and down the country. The people who should be able to tell us are the Libraries Departmental Representatives in NALGO branches. The problem is how to collect and assess this information on a national basis.

MICHAEL T. SLEIGHTHOLM, *Leeds Public Libraries.*

Information, please, on Mobile Libraries

Mr. Parfitt, of the Exmoor Travelling Library, and myself, are in the process of preparing a book on Mobile Library Services. The outline has received the approval of the Press and Publications Committee of the A.A.L.

The only effective method of collecting the information we needed seemed to be the use of a questionnaire, and although this made us undesirable pests to many busy librarians, we had a good response to our circular. There are a few still unreturned which we would be pleased to see.

If any librarian who administers a mobile library service has not yet had a questionnaire, perhaps he would be kind enough to get in touch with me at the Central Library, High Street, Acton, W.3. We attempted to circularise every authority with a mobile library, but our information will almost certainly prove to have been incomplete, and we would welcome information from any source on this subject.

L. B. HORNE, *Acton Public Libraries.*

Scrap the National Award

It is now more than a year since the National Joint Council negotiated the award on Local Government Salaries, at which time it was agreed that the National Grading for Library Staffs would have to be revised. Information received since the report in the June issue of *Liaison* seems to indicate that a reasonable agreement on this matter is very unlikely, even on a basis of control of five whole-time staff.

In these circumstances would it not be better to abandon the National Grading, and for the National Joint Council to issue a statement to this effect? In this way Local Authorities would be free to deal with this matter themselves, as indeed some have already done, and officers holding

posts to which a National Grading is applicable would be able to take individual appeals for re-grading in those cases where the Authority will not take action.

As a representative on the Service Conditions Sub-Committee (Local Government) of the East Midlands District Committee of NALGO, I am contemplating introducing a motion on these lines at an early meeting of the Sub-Committee for reference to the National Service Conditions Sub-Committee, and therefore I would appreciate some indication of the reaction of library staffs to this idea.

F. R. ROBINSON, *Deputy Borough Librarian, Grimsby.*

Interlingua v Esperanto

Mr. Wilson (August *Assistant*) misunderstands both my article and the nature of Interlingua when he seeks to set up an opposition between it and Esperanto. The two languages are complementary, not competitive. Personally, I don't like Esperanto as a language, because it is so very barbarous, but I know that it works and that you can do many interesting, useful and significant things with it. What you cannot do, however, is make yourself understood in it to someone who has not learned it. Your potential audience is limited to about 25,000. Interlingua, on the other hand, although those who can speak it may be limited to a few hundred, can be *understood* by any person with a good knowledge of a Romance language (including Esperanto, which has only a handful of Germanic and Slav words), a total audience of over 250,000,000. That is why it is so significant in documentation, why it is being used with such success for homotopic abstracts and for the reports of medical congresses. Finally, Mr. Wilson, there is no reason for supposing it to be a whit more difficult to learn than Esperanto.

B. C. SEXTON, *Liverpool Public Libraries.*

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What am I offered?

by R. H. Millward, Croydon Public Libraries

I don't imagine many librarians regularly read the periodical *The Exchange and Mart* (incorporating "The Bazaar, The New Home and The Stamp Dealer"). It doesn't go in for attractive covers like *Country Life* or the *Field*, or hit you between the eyes like *Life* and *Punch* although it has recently decided to change its cover title from black to red. Its contents are likely to appeal to you if you enjoy the back page of the *New Statesman*. Let me introduce you to the book section.

It is to be found under COLLECTING—BOOKS, sub-divided into a very basic classification scheme: Magazines and Newspapers, Old Boys' Books, Reference Works and Various. There seems to be no market for Old Girls' Books, but if you have been hoarding Magnets, Gems and Sexton Blakes, you are in the money. The Magazines are mostly film weeklies, *Wide Worlds* and *Health and Efficiency*. The Newspapers are a very mixed bag—I wonder who will buy "500 clean surplus newspapers 1955-7"? Perhaps someone opening up a fish and chip shop.

The section on Reference Works regularly includes Jane's (ships and aircraft, not strip cartoons), Arthur Mee's Children's Encyclopaedia, Caxton and Waverley Book Co. publications, histories of the first World War and a selection of Britannicas varying in price according to age like secondhand cars. The newest ones—"1957 ed. still in publisher's cartons" (evidence of the success of persuasive adverts—pipe-smoking Dad, radiant Mum and two eager children knee-deep in homework and the Britannica) go at about £70, while older ones come down to around £5 for a 9th edition. The knack seems to be to phrase your advert to dispel all suspicion that the set was bought and found to be poor value, e.g.: "R.A.F. widow—unwanted gift." One advertiser tries a new line: "£40 or exchange new linen, china, cutlery" (would he be getting married by any chance?).

The "Various" department is rightly named. Subjects range from railways, yoga, astrology, tobacco and Kate Greenaway to monkeys, draughts, Nazis, goats and "anything English before 1714." "Marilyn Monroe books, 2s. 9d. post free, nice Christmas present" (plenty of *illus.*, we hope). "Khama Sutra, Eng. translation, very rare, highest offers" (English agent for one of those Bombay booksellers?). Here is a possible purchaser: "Lady requires copy of Khama Sutra, Perfumed Garden, Decameron, Balzac's Droll Stories and similar works"—obviously a female sociologist doing research!

How about a plunge into the unknown? You might find a rare first edition in "about 10,000 books, mags., pers., mostly pre-war, offer wanted for the lot or exchange anything" (another 10,000 books, mags., etc.). One advertiser proudly boasts: "ANY BOOK from me!" and specially recommends "Angela Darling—125 pages of sprightly reading." The specialised meaning of the word "modern" when applied to books is shown in an advert: "MODERN BOOKS exchangeable at ½-price—Way of Life, P. Wildeblood; Beast in Man, E. Zola, etc."

Feel like trying a lucky dip? "Two famous French novels sent for 10s." And what on earth are "Customs Revenue Review books 1900-1909" and "Vols. I, II, III, Power and Pedal"?

Division of Staff: a Canadian Example

By David L. Houldridge, Kent County Library

The division of public library staffs into professional and clerical grades has been a recurrent topic during the last few years. It has been raised at annual conferences, it has been discussed at local meetings and it has featured in the columns of our professional journals.

In July 1957 I returned to England after close on three years with the Toronto Public Libraries, Canada, where such a system is successfully operated. In the notes which follow I would like to record some of my impressions, dealing particularly with the allocation of duties between the two grades of staff. My own experience was gained in the adult lending department of a medium-sized branch library and it is in this context that my comments should be read.

Qualified staff in Canada are known as "librarians," their non-professional colleagues as "assistants." The former are now required to be university graduates who have done at least a one-year full-time course at a library school, leading to the additional degree of Bachelor of Library Science. Assistants are drawn from various groups. In Toronto the majority of them are English or European immigrants. These latter are especially useful for their knowledge of foreign languages (and literatures too, very often), as Toronto is an extremely cosmopolitan city.

Turning now to what has sometimes been a bone of contention in Britain: how is the work divided between the librarians and the assistants? For convenience I will tabulate, starting with the librarian:—

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1. *Book selection.* Regular listing of suggested additions to stock; also checking of special subject lists and booksellers' catalogues sent out periodically from the central Library.

2. *Stock revision.* The aim here is to keep branch stocks as "alive" as possible. Each month a different section of books is revised, so that the complete stock is overhauled once every year. Unwanted books are sent to a central pool for re-allocation to other libraries, addition to the central reserve stock, or discarding.

3. *Advisory work with readers.* This, together with the two foregoing items, forms the core of a librarian's work. In normal circumstances no public department of a Toronto library is ever open without at least one librarian on duty. This means that professional assistance is always available should people need it. Perhaps because of this fact, I found the Canadian public more ready than their British counterpart to ask the staff questions. Moreover, librarians are expected as a matter of course to develop their book knowledge by scanning reviews, examining all additions to stock, and reading as widely as possible.

4. *Registration of new readers.* At first glance this may seem a clerical routine, but it is best done by a librarian who can then "follow-up" by dealing with any request the new reader may make.

5. *School classes.* These are mainly the concern of the children's librarians. Each spring, however, librarians in the adult departments give introductory talks to classes of school children transferring their membership from the Boys' and Girls' departments.

6. *Special Indexes.* Though cataloguing and classification are centralised processes, the compilation of special indexes is the responsibility of branch staff. Typical of those maintained are a classified guide to the fiction stock, and a title index to drama anthologies.

7. *Booklists.* From time to time librarians compile subject lists based on the libraries' stocks. Once a year a committee of librarians edits an annotated list of "150 books of the last three years." This is circulated across Canada through the co-operation of the Canadian Library Association.

8. *Administration.* The routine common to all public libraries—timesheets, reports, statistical returns, etc.

9. *Displays.* Choice of subjects and materials for display.

10. *Maintenance of stock.* Librarians must decide which books shall be withdrawn, which rebound, and which repaired, either by an assistant at the branch, or at the central book repair department.

11. *Counter work.* The majority of this is done by assistants, of course. It is noted here to indicate that librarians help out when necessary—over meal breaks and at rush hours.

12. *Extension work.* This varies according to local demand and the inclination of the individual librarian. Many librarians give book talks to local groups; some serve as committee members of neighbourhood organisations; others write book columns for district newspapers; a few arrange cultural activities in their branches, e.g., lectures, poetry recitals, play-readings.

So much for the librarian. The assistant's duties are more briefly listed; they include:—

1. *Counter work.* The usual routines connected with the issue and return of books; overdue notices; shelving of returned books; daily shelf tidying.

2. *Filing.* At some branches assistants are trained to file catalogue cards. They are filed "over the rods" and afterwards checked by a librarian.

3. *Typing.* Including typing of book cards, stock cards, and lists of recent accessions.

4. *Posters.* There is a poster pool at the central library maintained by a full-time commercial artist. Assistants who have had art training are used to provide supplementary material for use in their own branches.

5. *Supplies.* Assistants keep an eye on the stationery and office supplies, and order the necessary replacements from the central library each month.

6. *Periodicals.* This entails recording and displaying each periodical on receipt, and reinforcing the back numbers which are then circulated for home reading.

7. *Repairs.* Some of this is done at the central book repair department, some by branch assistants who have been given a brief training by a librarian or at the book repair department.

How far is this relevant to our needs in Britain? The most important point is that in Canada (as also in the U.S.A.), division of staff into professional and non-professional grades is regarded as essential in public libraries. An allocation of duties similar to the one described above is made between senior and junior staff in some British public libraries, but it is seldom as well defined. Moreover, in this country we lack a clear-cut distinction between staff functions at the point of *entry* into the profession. The Canadian example proves that such a distinction is practicable, and from my own experience in Toronto I would suggest that it is highly beneficial to the service given.

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